

# FLATHEAD COUNTY TRANSPORTATION PLAN PHASE II

## GOALS & OBJECTIVES TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

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*Prepared for:*

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Kalispell, Montana

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## Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of this project is to develop a county-wide Transportation Plan that will address regional transportation issues, overall travel convenience, traffic safety, and property access in addition to potential special issues such as traffic calming, transportation demand management (TDM), and multi-modal connections. The Plan will include recommendations for short-term Transportation System Management (TSM) improvements as well as recommended modifications and capital improvements to the “Major Street Network (MSN)”. The Plan will address all modes of transportation in a balanced attempt to meet the current and future transportation needs of Flathead County while in compliance with state and federal requirements.

The goals developed for this transportation plan are goals the county has already developed for itself in their *Growth Policy* and other Neighborhood Plans. These goals and policies that have been developed are listed below. With these current goals and policies in place, specific objectives have been developed to achieve these specific goals.

### Goals

#### Helena Flats Neighborhood Plan

- To improve pedestrian safety by constructing a pedestrian and bicycle pathway and mitigating unnecessary traffic through the Helena Flats Neighborhood.
- To expand the bike trail, once constructed, first to areas south of Helena Flats / Eid Road, and then to areas further to the north within the Helena Flats neighborhood.

#### The Canyon Plan

- To provide public services consistent with the level of services demanded or as safety standards apply and as anticipated by this plan.

#### The Flathead County Growth Policy

- Maintain safe and efficient traffic flow and mobility on county roadways.
- Develop a quality transportation network to meet the present and future needs of the public.
- Identify and support alternative modes of transportation.

## **Policies**

In order to achieve the Goals, the following policies are needed to guide decision-making and address issues within the community.

- Manage land use and the transportation system as a unified and coordinated system to ensure that one does not outpace the other.
- Limit private driveways from directly accessing arterials and collector roads to safe separation distances.
- Encourage local (neighborhood) roads that access directly onto collector roads.
- Areas in proximity to employment and retail centers should be recognized as more suitable for higher residential densities and mixed use development.
- To protect public safety and allow safe travel, restrict development in areas without adequate road improvements.
- Support land use patterns along transit corridors that reduce vehicle dependency and protect public safety.
- Develop a transportation grid system that minimizes environmental impacts to developed and natural areas.
- Promote coordinated and cooperative transportation planning with Kalispell, Columbia Falls, Whitefish and Montana Departments of Transportation and the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.
- In county areas adjacent to cities, adopt urban road standards and designs consistent with the adjacent city road standards.
- Restrict direct access from private properties onto the Montana State highways and require frontage roads where needed and internal vehicle circulation roads for all development outside of urban areas.
- Plan for and pursue opportunities for the development of additional east-west transportation corridors, especially between U.S. Highway 2, 93 and MT Highway 206.
- Adopt urban transportation standards in areas developed to urban densities.
- Ensure that identified functional class, road easement width, and condition of existing transportation facilities are adequate.
- County road improvements needed to mitigate impacts directly attributable to the subdivision or development should be required as a necessary component of that development to preserve the carrying capacity of the roadway.
- Require development projects to design local road systems that complement planned land uses and maintain mobility on arterial roads and highways.
- As subdivision developments are proposed, require road easement dedications for identified areas of future connectivity to serve the present and future needs of the county residents.

- Restrict signalized highway intersections to a minimum of one mile spacing outside of urban areas to promote mobility and ½ mile within urban settings such as Evergreen.
- Attempt to develop cooperative agreements with the Montana Department of Transportation and the United States Federal Highway Administration to promote coordination of land use and transportation planning and the efficient use of transportation facilities.
- Develop a comprehensive countywide transportation plan to categorize current needs and to identify future needs.
- Develop uniform system of prioritization for road improvements and maintenance.
- As funding and resources allow, develop a Dust Abatement Program to mitigate dust impact from traffic on county roads.
- Encourage developments that provide functional alternative modes of travel such as bicycle and pedestrian paths.
- Identify and prioritize areas for a predictable regional and interconnected bicycle path network and require pedestrian/bicycle easements on both sides of identified county roads. Encourage developments that aid and/or connect to this network.
- Support the partnership between Eagle Transit, the State of Montana and the National Park Service to develop a joint transit system that services both Glacier National Park and the residents of Flathead County.
- Support the expansion of the Glacier International Airport to keep pace with the emerging demand for aviation services.
- Determine and prioritize areas for bike path easement acquisition and construction, prioritize use of funds, guide grant applications, identify roads that should have bicycle lanes, determine maintenance funding mechanisms, and set county-wide bicycle path/lane construction standards.

### **Objectives (Recommended Actions)**

These objectives are designed to provide measurable milestones regarding transportation planning and to assist in achieving the goals stated above.

- Make construction of new sidewalks and pathways in areas where they do not currently exist, including rural areas, a high funding priority.
- Plan for through, continuous streets to the extent possible. When cul-de-sacs are appropriate due to ownership, topography, or other constraints, ensure that a future street extension can be made via a right-of-way dedication, or at the very least, a pedestrian connection.
- The County shall make the provision of sidewalks, pathways, and other non-motorized transportation facilities part of a concurrency program and policy.
- The County shall develop a menu of traffic calming measures for use on new and newly reconstructed residential collector streets.

### **Conclusion**

It is recommended that for the county-wide Transportation Plan that existing transportation related goals be incorporated from the previously prepared community planning documents, with heavy reliance placed on those developed in the current Growth Policy Update. These documents contain guiding principles used to develop and implement a functioning transportation system in the community.